

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-03

INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

USIA-06 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DODE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 /064 W

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P R 021730Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0471

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SP, NATO, PINT, PFOR, MILI, GW

SUBJECT: FRG MILITARY OFFICER PARTICIPATES IN SPAIN'S

ANNUAL VICTORY PARADE

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FACT THAT THE FRG'S HIGHEST RANKING

ARMY OFFICER PARTICIPATED IN THE ANNUAL MILITARY

PARADE IN MADRID CELEBRATING FRANCO'S VICTORY OVER

SPANISH REPUBLICAN FORCES HAS RAISED A POLITICAL FUROR

IN GERMANY. LT. GENERAL HORST HILDEBRANDT, INSPECTOR

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GENERAL OF THE ARMY, WAS THE GUEST OF THE SPANISH ARMY

FROM MAY 24 TO 27. DURING THIS PERIOD AN UNSCHEDULED MEETING WITH FRANCO TOOK PLACE. AT THAT TIME HE WAS INVITED TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL VICTORY PARADE AND DID SO. WHILE DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER DID NOT YIELD TO LEFT-WING DEMANDS THAT THE OFFICER BE DISMISSED FOR HAVING ACCEPTED FRANCO'S INVITATION, THE OBJECTIONS WITHIN THE SPD POLITICAL PARTY WERE SUFFICIENTLY BROAD AND DEEP-SEATED TO CAUSE THE MINISTER PUBLICLY TO REBUKE THE GENERAL. THE AFFAIR DEMONSTRATES ONCE AGAIN THAT FRANCO'S SPAIN IS ANATHEMA TO EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS, EVEN TO SOCIALISTS LIKE THOSE IN THE FRG WHO ARE MOST CONSCIOUS OF THE BENEFITS WHICH NATO DERIVES FROM SPAIN'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE U.S. END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, THE NEWS OF HILDEBRANDT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE VICTORY PARADE WAS GREETED WITH SURPRISE AND DISMAY BY MILITARY AND POLITICAL CIRCLES IN BONN. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEFENSE MINISTRY WAS QUICK TO STATE THAT, WHILE THE GENERAL'S ROUTINE VISIT TO SPAIN HAD BEEN CLEARED WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER, HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE VICTORY PARADE HAD NOT. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY INITIALLY ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN HILDEBRANDT'S ACTIONS AS THOSE OF AN INDIVIDUAL PUT IN AN UNFORESEEN SITUATION WHO DOES NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO BE IMPOLITE TO HIS HOST. HOWEVER, THE PROTESTS FROM SPD POLITICIANS WERE SO STRONG THAT THIS POSITION COULD NOT LONG BE MAINTAINED.

2. AS WAS PERHAPS TO BE EXPECTED, THE JUSO CHAIRMAN, HEIDI WIECZOREK-ZUEL, DEMANDED THAT DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER REQUIRE HILDEBRANDT TO RETIRE. MORE SERIOUS FOR THE GOVERNMENT WAS THE FACT THAT THE SPD'S MILITARY EXPERT AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ALFONS PAWELCZYK, PUBLICLY CALLED HILDEBRANDT'S PARTICIPATION "INCOMPREHENSIBLE." PAWELCZYK WENT ON TO STATE: "NO ONE SHOULD DO ANYTHING TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS INTERESTED IN A STABILIZATION OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL REGIME IN SPAIN. SIMPLE PARTICIPATION IN A PARADE, WHICH CELEBRATES THE VICTORY OF A DICTATORIAL REGIME OVER A FREELY ELECTED REPUBLIC, IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOUND TO LEAD TO MISINTERPRETATIONS." THE SPD'S FDP COALITION PARTNER WAS ALSO DISTURBED. ITS MILITARY EXPERT, RETIRED COLONEL LOTHAR KRALL, STATED THAT HE COULD NOT IMAGINE THAT AN INSPECTOR GENERAL COULD PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A PERFORMANCE WITHOUT LEBER'S CONSENT. "IF, HOWEVER, HE DID SO ON HIS OWN ACCORD, HIS ACTIONS SERVE NO USEFUL FUNCTION AT A TIME WHEN DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING ON CONCERNING SPAIN'S MEMBERSHIP

IN NATO."

3. LEBER WAS PARTICIPATING IN THE GERMAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT'S ANNUAL CONGRESS IN HAMBURG WHEN NEWS OF HILDEBRANDT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARADE FIRST REACHED HIM. LEBER TOLD THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, HEINZ OSKAR VETTER, THAT HE DID NOT AGREE WITH THE GENERAL'S ACTIONS. VETTER THEN TOLD THE DELEGATES WHAT LEBER HAD SAID.

4. THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH TO QUIET THE STORM. PRESS COVERAGE WAS EXTENSIVE AND CRITICAL. IN A TV INTERVIEW

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ON MAY 28, LEBER CALLED HILDEBRANDT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARADE AN "INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT." "HUMAN BEINGS MAKE MISTAKES ONCE IN A WHILE," THE MINISTER SAID, "THEY ARE LIABLE TO COMMIT INCONSIDERATE ACTS." WHAT HAS HAPPENED SHOWS THAT "WE ALL HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE CAREFUL IN THE FUTURE WHEN REPRESENTING (THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC) ABROAD."

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5. PRESUMABLY BECAUSE IT VIEWS SPAIN WITH SOMEWHAT LESS DISFAVOR THAN DOES THE SPD, THE CDU DID NOT DIRECTLY CRITICIZE HILDEBRANDT'S ACTIONS. IT DID TAKE THE OCCASION TO ATTACK THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ALLEGEDLY ARE ALWAYS READY TO CRITICIZE WESTERN TOTALITARIAN REGIMES WHILE REMAINING SILENT IN THE FACE OF EASTERN TOTALITARIANISM. LATER, AFTER NEWS OF LEBER'S REMARKS TO VETTER HAD BECOME PUBLIC, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CDU/CSU GROUP IN THE BUNDESTAG SUBMITTED TWO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO PUT LEBER IN A BAD LIGHT: THE FIRST IMPLIED THAT IT WAS IMPROPER FOR LEBER TO HAVE REBUKED HILDEBRANDT VIA THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE SECOND IMPLIED THAT LEBER HAD REBUKED HILDEBRANDT WITHOUT GIVING HIM A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN HIMSELF. EVEN THE CDU, HOWEVER, HAS NOT SUPPORTED HILDEBRANDT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARADE.
HILLENBRAND

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